

REMARKS

An Office Action was mailed on June 8, 2004. Claims 1 – 28 are pending in the present application. In this Response, Applicants cancel claims 4 and 16 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend claims 1, 2, 5, 15, 17, and 25 - 28. No new matter is introduced.

OBJECTION TO CLAIMS

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 23 and 24 are objected to as each being dependent on a rejected base claim, but that each would be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of its associated base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants cancel claim 4 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend base claims 1, 2, 5, 17 and 25 – 27 to essentially include the limitations of canceled claim 4. In addition, Applicants cancel claim 16 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend base claims 15 and 28 to essentially include the limitations of canceled claim 16. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended base claims 1, 2, 5, 15, 17 and 25 – 28 thereby stand in condition for allowance. As objected claims 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 17, 23 and 24 each depend from one of allowable claims 2, 5, and 15, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 17, 23 and 24 are allowable for at least this reason. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objections to the claims be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 10 – 12, 15, 18 – 22 and 25 – 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Roberts et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,418,558) in view of Raith (U.S. Patent No. 6,510,515). As noted above, Applicants amend base claims 1, 2, 5, 15, 17 and 25 – 28, and respectfully traverse this rejection.

For the reasons given above, Applicants respectfully submit that amended base claims 1, 2, 5, 15, 17 and 25 – 28 are currently allowable. As claims 8, 10 – 12, and 18 – 22 each depend from one of allowable claims 5 and 15, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 8, 10 – 12, and 18 – 22 are allowable for at least this reason.

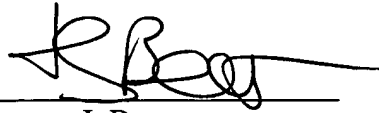
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' invention as disclosed in independent claims 1, 2, 5, 15 and 25 - 28 is not made obvious by Roberts and Raith, either alone or in combination, and therefore that 1, 2, 5, 15 and 25 - 28 stand in condition for allowance. As claims 3, 6 – 14 and 17 – 24 each depend from one of allowable claims 1, 2, 5, 15 and 25 - 28, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3, 6 – 14 and 17 – 2 also stand in condition for allowance for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1 – 3, 5- 15, and 17 – 28, which include independent claims 1, 2, 5, 15 and 25 – 28, and the claims that depend therefrom, stand in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Bean', written over a horizontal line.

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DOCKET No.: FUJS 19.308 (100794-00119)